

# West Nottinghamshire College Group

## **Equality and Diversity Scheme**

**2014 - 2017**

## Foreword from the Principal

In November 2007, we published our first combined Equality Scheme, In 2010, to coincide with the new Equality Act we published a revision and this latest iteration takes into account the enormous amount of work that we have already done. Our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all sections of our community remains: we want this scheme to not only set out how we will meet the requirements of legislation but exceed them. Our vision for our work to ensure equality of opportunity is that the college will become a leader in its field.

Action to promote equality of opportunity is at the heart of the college's mission, vision and values. Our vision, a dynamic college for aspiring communities, places us at the heart of our community's regeneration and future economic prosperity, we will not be able to achieve this vision if we do not provide for all sections of our community and raise the aspirations, ambitions and life chances of all. It is our job to ensure that all sections of our community regardless of their personal characteristics, beliefs or way of life are given equal opportunity to succeed. We are an ambitious college and our strategic objective reflects this ambition: attaining excellence: reaching new heights. In 2012, the Ofsted inspectorate found the college's response to equality of opportunity good with outstanding features; however we are not complacent, we know that we can still improve and in order to do so we must reach new heights in both our commitment and action to ensure equality for all. Finally, our core values of respect, responsibility and professionalism has equality and diversity at their core; we will ensure that we not only respect but celebrate difference, we will all take personal responsibility for acting on the objectives within this scheme and finally by ensuring we attain the highest professional standards we will ensure that we respond to individual needs.

We must provide stretching and relevant education for all our learners, that not only enables them to succeed but reach new heights in terms of their personal aspirations and goals, we must work with our supplier network to ensure that our commitment to equality of opportunity is reflected within their own practices, we must work with our employers and businesses to provide opportunities for those sections of our society who suffer disadvantage and we must ensure that as an employer ourselves we have a diverse and vibrant workforce equipped with the skills necessary to achieve our ambitions. Diversity leads to creativity, creativity leads to success.

The goals that we have set ourselves within this scheme are challenging and are based on a comprehensive assessment of our current position. We are determined that we lead by example and create a college that we can be proud to work for and study in. Every one of us has our part to play, yes as senior managers we will provide strategic direction, challenge and lead by example but every single employee and learner must be leaders themselves if we are to succeed in our vision for equality and diversity within West Nottinghamshire College Group.

Dame Asha Khemka OBE DBE  
Principal and Chief Executive

## **Section A – Overview and Background**

### **Introduction**

The Equality Scheme for West Nottinghamshire College Group sets out our approach to ensuring that the college delivers for all sections of our community both in terms of our recruitment and achievement of learners and in terms of our employment practices and promotion opportunities throughout the college.

In drafting the scheme's main objectives and action plan we have undertaken a detailed data analysis related to both learners and staff, some actions have been identified as a result of this analysis and in particular where we may have a gap in achievement or are currently under represented by certain groups. In addition we have been mindful of the need to proactively promote equality of opportunity and therefore have included actions that will ensure that both our learners and staff are aware of the diversity and difference that goes to make up our society and are equipped to work in such a diverse environment.

Ensuring that equality of opportunity is embedded within all facets of our organisation is a key priority and actions identified within this scheme along with work to embed a set of core values will be the way in which we achieve this priority.

The scheme has been divided into two main sections; the first section sets out the broad context in which the college works, along with a statement of commitment against cross cutting themes such as impact assessment, positive action and consultation and communication. The second section sets out the specific context and actions for certain groups.

We will consult widely on the contents of this scheme and in particular will agree this scheme with our recognised trades union colleagues. We are committed to working in partnership with them to achieve our equality objectives.

### **What do we mean by equality of opportunity?**

Equality means treating everyone with equal dignity and worth regardless of particular characteristics. People have different needs, situations and goals and it is our job to ensure that we meet them. Achieving equality means the removal of discriminatory barriers that limit what people can do and often what they can be. We recognise that people can experience inequality in a range of ways including:

- Access to services
- Outcomes
- The degree of independence
- In how they are treated by others.

The aim of this scheme is to ensure that we tackle these inequalities in a number of ways that are relevant for our organisation.

## **The legislative and regulatory framework**

This scheme has been written in line with requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This act introduced a new single public sector duty for people who share the following **protected characteristics**:

Age  
Disability  
Gender reassignment  
Marriage/civil partnerships  
Pregnancy and maternity  
Race  
Religion and belief  
Sex  
Sexual orientation

The public sector duty is:

1. To eliminate conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. To advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those that do not.
3. To foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those that do not.

In fulfilling our duty under the Act we may have to treat some people more favourably than others for example in making reasonable adjustments for people with a disability or in implementing positive action strategies to address disadvantage or under representation.

Existing equalities legislation

Whilst the Equality Act 2010 extends the provisions of the law and is intended to simplify the current legislative framework it does not replace all pieces of current legislation. General and specific duties related to race, disability and gender are replaced by the single equality duty; however, we will be mindful of the need to comply with continuing provisions within legislation where appropriate.

### **Statutory Duties related to Prevent**

Under the above statutory duties which came into effect for colleges and education providers from 1 July 2015, the college has a duty to promote fundamental British values, our statement of how we will achieve this is included within section H of this scheme.

## **Section B - Our current position and context**

### **Progress against our Equality Scheme objectives 2010-2013**

Our Equality Scheme for 2010-2013 set out clear objectives in relation to equality of opportunity what follows is a summary of our progress against those objectives.

#### Community Cohesion

The college has worked with numerous partners including other providers, local and district councils, local schools, faith groups, BME networks and community groups to develop a range of responses to community cohesion. Key highlights across the three years include the development of the role of voluntary chaplain within the college and the work that he has taken forward to establish links to other faith groups across the community. Links with the traveller communities and support agencies to widen participation and provide training and education to this community. Links with local schools and the development of an events programmes that enables young people to collaboratively explore equality and diversity in a positive way, this resulted in the development of a 'community wall' where young people were able to visually represent their community and its differences both hidden and visible. Continued support for Nottingham Pride through attendance at the event and the promotion of Pride within the college. In 2013 the college joined the Stonewall Equality and College champions programme and we have worked proactively with other providers right across the region in the promotion and celebration of LGBT.

#### Developing the capacity and capability of our partner provider network

The college has worked extensively with its partner provider network to ensure that equality and diversity is embedding within teaching and learning and they are positively promoting and sharing best practice within this area. Work has included a much more sharpened focus on equality and diversity on partner appointment, monitoring and tracking of incidents related to equality and diversity on a monthly basis and the provision of online training and support for partners. This is in addition to the work of our learning consultants in enabling and supporting partners to develop and share good practice within their teaching and learning.

#### Focus on particular protected characteristics and ensure the college is inclusive and welcoming

In the three years since 2010, the college has had a particular focus on disability and sexual orientation, this has taken the form of specific student networks, celebratory and inspirational events and speakers and a focus on the rights and responsibilities of others to make the college an inclusive place for everyone. Activities have included celebrating LGBT month, a particular focus on homophobic bullying during anti-bullying week, the coordination of Vision Games with a particular focus on Paralympic sport. This is an area that will continue to be a focus for the college moving forward.

#### The development of staff networks to further the work on equality and diversity

This is an area where the college has not achieved what it set out to achieve. To date no staff networks have been established and this will be a key focus for our work into 2014 and beyond. An LGBT student network was established and is running into 2014, it would be our desire and a key priority that by the end of the life of this new scheme we have vibrant and active staff and student networks that make a significant contribution to the positive promotion and celebration of equality and diversity.

## Communication and consultation

Robust consultative mechanisms with our recognised unions have been developed throughout the life of this scheme. The equality steering group has been less effective its format and make up were reviewed at the beginning of 2014 and a revitalised group will meet for the first time in April 2014.

### **West Nottinghamshire College Group**

West Nottinghamshire College is a large Further Education College as constituted by the Further and Higher Education Act 2002 and subsequent amendments through the Learning and Skills Act 2000. The Corporation Board are responsible for the overall strategic direction and educational character of the college and for setting the broad policy framework within which we work.

The college was formed in the 1970s from the merger of an Arts and Technology College which dated back to 1904. The college has a vision to be “a dynamic college for aspiring communities”, with a mission “learners at the heart of excellence”. Our three core values are: respect, responsibility and professionalism

West Nottinghamshire College Group is one of the most successful colleges in the country. It has been on an incredible journey of success over the last eight years and is now widely regarded as one of the leaders within the skills sector. It has a well-earned reputation for excellence across all aspects of its provision; however it is probably best known for the work the college does in reengaging young people and in working with employers to develop solutions for their business success.

In 2009 the college was named a national Beacon College in recognition of its excellence and innovation. The college is not just renowned as an exceptional training provider but is also recognised as one of the best employers, being awarded a national Best Companies star rating, named the 14<sup>th</sup> best place to work in the public sector by the Sunday Times and more recently being awarded the IIP Gold Standard. As an employer in its own right, the college is the second largest within the local area with 1,300 staff. Vision Apprentices, its Apprentice Training Agency (ATA), will employ close to 500 young people during 2013/14, placing it within the top five employers within the local area.

Each year the college provides education and training to approaching 30,000 full and part-time students across all major industry sectors and at pre-GCSE to university levels. Over 600 of those students study at higher education level with 9,000 engaged in an apprenticeship programme through the college and a further 6,000 engaged in some form of training in the workplace.

The college’s on-campus provision primarily serves the needs of Mansfield, Ashfield and clusters of smaller towns and villages across the border between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, however, the college delivers employer related and apprenticeship training right across the country and to some of the largest employers in the country.

The college has carved a national reputation for excellence when it comes to its work with employers and in particular the work the college has done in supporting young people into work through an apprenticeship.

The college has three subsidiary companies – bksb, the longest established, provides on-line assessment tools and resources to help improve English and Maths. bksb provides their innovative software solution to the vast majority of the FE sector and in addition to over 2,000 companies world-wide. Most recently, bksb has established a company in India and is currently working with the NSDC and has had initial discussions with the Indian Government to broker a national deal to deliver an on-line package of training to help improve the reading and speaking skills of India’s large cohort of call centre workers.

Vision Apprentices was established as an ATA in 2010 and it is widely regarded as one of the best examples of an ATA model in the country. It was one of 16 pathfinder projects established to run the ATA model. Vision Apprentices has focussed much of its effort on supporting young people into work. It offers full recruitment and after recruitment support to an employer to make the employment of the apprentice as straight forward as possible.

The college is a significant national provider, holding the largest college contract for 16-18 apprenticeships within the country. Despite this national footprint, the college is very much rooted within its local community, being a key partner in raising aspiration and improving inward investment into areas that have suffered significant economic decline. This commitment to the local is exemplified in a number of ways:

- A £40m investment in local facilities for learning, by September 2014, the main campus at Derby Road will be transformed to provide an aspirational gateway to the local community and the college will, in addition, have developed a specialist centre for Construction and Engineering Innovation.
- The development of a specialist centre for young people who have become disengaged from learning and from their communities. The centre has seen close to 350 young people undertake training, over 80% of completers progress to further learning, apprenticeships or employment. The centre has contributed to a 2% reduction in NEET figures.
- The opening of the first Studio School in Nottinghamshire. Vision Studio School, open in September 2014, will provide an alternative learning experience for young people wishing to follow careers in Engineering and Transport, and Health and Care.

The college's commitment to equality and diversity is well established within its vision, mission and values. The college has a cross college equality and diversity steering group tasked with responsibility for monitoring progress in this area. The college does not have equality and diversity manager as the responsibility sits with all staff across the organisation. A strategic steer and oversight of equality and diversity within the college is provided by the Director: Communications, Marketing and learner engagement who has significant knowledge and experience within this area. The college's most recent Ofsted report published in July 2012 awarded the college a good grade for equality of opportunity with many outstanding features. The college's latest self-assessment report maintains this grade in this area.

At the heart of our vision and mission lies a belief that the potential of all people needs to be recognised, respected and realised; that all people regardless of their personal circumstances have the absolute right to be treated with dignity and respect. The ability to live and work in a diverse, challenging and changing world is the key for success and fulfilment for individuals and organisations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Integral to this belief is our Equality and Diversity Scheme and action plan which is supported by Corporation level commitment and is championed by the Executive team.

Through valuing the diversity and difference of our learner and staff population, the college will be able to make real strides in meeting Government targets for participation, skills and success. We believe it is the differences in us all that help us to innovate and think creatively, as an organisation we need to harness the differences of all our staff and learners to enable the college to respond creatively and positively to what is an unprecedented time of change within the sector. In this sense, the business case for a clear and comprehensive approach to equality and diversity is obvious; by valuing the difference of all our staff and learners we will ensure the future success of both the college and our local community.

A full copy of the college's action plan related to equality and diversity is included at the end of this Scheme in table 1.

### **The college as an employer**

This Scheme not only covers our responsibilities as an education provider but as one of the largest employers within the local area. We have an ambition to recruit, retain and develop high quality staff; that the college will be the employer of first choice for the local community and beyond. The college currently holds the Investors in People Gold Standard as an external validation of our commitment to staff training and development. In 2009 and again in 2010 the college was awarded a star rating in the national Best Companies scheme. In 2010, the college was placed within the top 75 public sector organisations in which to work. In 2011 the college was awarded a national Beacon Award for its staff development linked to equality and diversity.

We will only achieve this vision if we embrace equality of opportunity and promote diversity and difference within our staff group, it is this diversity and difference that will foster creativity and enable the college to meet its overarching vision and strategic priorities. Specifically in relation to our role as an employer we will:

- Review our jobs regularly and remove any requirements that are unnecessary and may exclude certain groups.
- Advertise our vacancies widely to attract a diversity of applicant.
- Work proactively to address issues of under representation within our staff group.
- Encourage the development and progression of all staff to ensure that they actively contribute to the college's success.
- Ensure that our pay and reward processes are fair and address any issues that may exist in relation to equal pay issues.
- To provide managers with training to ensure that they manage staff fairly and treat staff with dignity.
- To support managers in the implementation of equalities legislation.

The college has a comprehensive HR Strategy; this is cognisant of this Equality Scheme and incorporates an objective to be an exemplar of best practice in relation to equality and our role as an employer.

The college is committed to working in partnership and consultation with the recognised trade unions and will consult with trade unions regarding the content and practical implementation of this Scheme.



## **Section C – How will the college meet the specific duties set out within the Equality Act**

### **Eliminating discrimination**

The college operates a zero tolerance policy in relation to discrimination; we perceive this part of our equality duty to be a minimum standard that all employees, learners, contractors and visitors to the college will achieve.

All aspects of this scheme will support the college in achieving this aspect of our public sector duty. We have a number of policies, procedures and processes in place to ensure that as we have an understanding of the rights of individuals to study and work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination and that we have robust mechanisms in place for the reporting and acting on complaints of discrimination and harassment. These policies, procedures and processes include:

- Harassment and dignity at work policy
- Fair recruitment practices
- Fair recruitment and admissions processes for learners
- Mandatory training and development for all employees and partners to the college

Instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying are reported to the Corporation Board at every meeting. In 2014/15 4 reported incidents within the college and 2 reported incidents within our partner provider network.

### Reporting incidents

The college has robust and confidential mechanisms in place to enable staff and learners to report incidents of discrimination. The confidentiality of the individual will be maintained as will the individual be protected from any reprisals as a result of their complaint. Complaints against members of staff should be made to the college's HR team and about learners to the college's student support team.

From feedback from learners it would appear that low level inappropriate or homophobic comments are common place across the college, this is a factor that is well known within the whole education sector and as a result the college will instigate a positive campaign about the use of language and homophobic bullying throughout the life of this Scheme.

### **Advancing equality of opportunity**

The achievement of this duty is enshrined within the college's vision, values and mission. The college will work hard to ensure that each individual reaches their full potential regardless of their personal characteristics or socio-economic status.

The college will make all reasonable adjustments to its provision, teaching and learning resources, access and other publications to enable equal access for all individuals and groups.

Within the college's context advancing equality of opportunity includes the following core foci:

- Ensuring our staff body is representative of the communities that we serve;
- Ensuring that young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) are provided with innovative ways of reengaging through the college's Ashfield Centre;
- Ensuring our young people are enabled to progress to Higher Education through the provision of locally accessible and relevant HE programmes;
- Ensuring that our college embraces diversity and difference and celebrates it at every available opportunity;
- Ensuring that equality and diversity is embedded within the college's curriculum offer, teaching and learning practice and core business processes; and
- By promoting careers and courses to underrepresented groups.

## **Fostering good relations**

The college will proactively promote equality and diversity. It will ensure that our learners and staff have an understanding and appreciation of the diversity and difference that goes to make up the society in which we live and work. The college will achieve this part of its equality duty by:

- Ensuring that a celebration of diversity is embedded within teaching and learning and our cross college events and activities;
- Providing resources on the college's intranet and enable understanding and therefore help to foster good relations;
- Working in partnership with other organisations and individuals to ensure that our learners and staff are exposed to diversity and difference; and
- Work within our local community to support community cohesion

## Section D - Assessing the impact of our work

In conducting its impact assessment the college is committed to consulting with a wide range of bodies and individuals, including representatives from those groups likely to be affected by the policy (eg people with disabilities, women, BME communities, the LGBT community, faith groups), the recognised trade unions and other agencies who work to advocate on behalf of a number of groups.

The college's work is organised into the following key departments/functions which are overseen at Head of school or service level:

- Teaching and Learning including the delivery of Higher education provision
- Quality and Performance
- Business Development and Commercial Enterprises
- Student Support
- Estates Management
- Facilities management
- Human Resources and People Development
- Finance and Funding
- Strategic Planning and Curriculum Development
- Communications, Marketing and Learner Engagement
- Capital Projects
- ICT and Learning Resources.

In order to help with the monitoring process the college has developed an equality and diversity report which will cover key data in relation to some protected characteristics and socio-economic status. This report is used by teams in their self assessment process and is used by the senior management team as a mechanism to gauge progress against objectives and outstanding issues. In 2013 we introduced a requirement for staff to declare their sexual orientation and by the end of 2015 we would look to introduce a requirement for students to do the same. We have no requirement for staff to declare their religious beliefs at this current time.

The college has embedded an assessment of equality and diversity within learning and teaching since 2007. The learning consultants team as well as curriculum managers and heads of school will work with tutors to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded in our teaching and learning practice across the college.

## Section E - Consulting on and communicating our objectives

The college is committed to consulting with all stakeholders in relation to its equality and diversity objectives. The college will publish this Scheme in draft form and invite comment from a range of stakeholders both internally and externally.

The college has reviewed the membership and terms of reference for its equality and diversity steering group with the aim of creating a more robust and effective means of consulting on and monitoring the implementation of this Scheme.

The college is committed to consulting and communicating with its learners over a range of issues and will use established mechanisms for learner consultation to review and monitor its Equality and Diversity Scheme. The college has agreed a comprehensive Learner Voice Strategy. This will be the major mechanism by which we consult and listen to our learners. In addition, the college's Students' Union will elect an Equality and Diversity Officer who will work with managers in the development and implementation of a range of activities to promote equality and diversity across the college.

The college will consult with its recognised trade unions at regional and local level.

We will utilise learner, staff and customer feedback to gather information about learners' perceptions of the college and how effective our commitment to equality and diversity has been embedded across our learner population.

The college has identified the key partners with whom it will develop its approach to equality and diversity:

- Employees
- Learners
- Recognised trade unions and their elected officials
- Local schools
- Adult and Community Learning Service Nottinghamshire
- Nottinghamshire Futures
- EMFEC Equality and Diversity Regional Network
- Stonewall equality champions network
- Local District and County Councils
- Job Centre Plus
- The Skills Funding Agency
- The Network for Black Professionals
- The Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

### Publications policy

We will ensure that this Scheme and appendices are accessible by publishing them electronically on the intranet and website. We will include a feedback form as part of this electronic communication to enable members of the public and all internal stakeholders to feedback comments and suggestions for improvement. We will make this Scheme available on request in alternative formats to meet individual needs.

We will produce an executive summary of this Scheme for distribution to all staff and learners to ensure that everyone is aware of our commitment and their responsibilities in meeting these commitments.

## **Section F - Positive action**

The college will engage in a number of positive action measures to ensure that we address issues of underrepresentation and in some cases to help the college address achievement gaps of specified learners.

Underrepresentation where it exists will be picked up as part of our action planning conducted on an annual basis.

### Underrepresentation within the curriculum

Our data analysis shows us that we have underrepresentation in specific curriculum area as follows:

- Males entering childcare and hairdressing and beauty therapy
- Females entering construction and engineering.

Through the college's marketing efforts and in particular through the work of the learner recruitment team we will work to promote such careers for young people making decisions at years 10 and 11.

We will implement a number of strategies within our curriculum to address any issues of underrepresentation. These measures will include positive action strategies in the recruitment of positive staff role models and the provision of additional support for those learners identified as at risk.

## **Section G - Using procurement to improve equality of opportunity**

As a major buyer of services both locally and nationally, the college is afforded the opportunity to promote equality of opportunity through its supply chain. All suppliers who contract for services with the college will be required to comply with our Equality Scheme and its objectives, evidence of our suppliers' commitment to equality will be sought at tender stage and prior to them being approved on our supplier database.

The college has to have regard for probity and the safeguarding of public funds in its procurement processes and procedures and as such the procedures we do have in place to approve suppliers are particularly robust. We will work with small and minority businesses to encourage them to apply to work with the college and will support them to meet our requirements.

## **Section H – Promoting fundamental British values**

### **West Nottinghamshire College Values**

The college is a values led organisation and as such we will actively promote values that enable our students to live and work in a multi-cultural and diverse community. Our students will be guided to not simply tolerate difference but to celebrate it in all its forms. We firmly believe that when people are enabled to be themselves they are more productive and more able to meet their own potential.

The college has three organisational values of Respect, Responsibility and Professionalism and these are well embedded across the college. In July 2015 the college undertook and exercise with all teaching staff linked to the promotional of values and this work will be continued within curriculum areas with students.

As a college community the values that we uphold will guide every aspect of our behaviour.

### **What are British Values as defined by the Government**

“Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs”

### **West Nottinghamshire College embeds, supports and promotes these British Values in the following ways:**

#### **Democracy**

- A strong and vibrant learner voice programme that takes the views of students seriously.
- A course representative structure that elects students to represent the interests of their peers.
- An active and vibrant Students’ Union with a sabbatical president, elected by the student body and a number of other non-paid roles elected to represent the views of students.
- Elected student representation on our Governing Body.
- Student representatives on key college fora such as the Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity Steering Groups.
- A tutorial programme and wider activities that engage students in the democratic processes of this country and encourage students to make their voice heard through appropriate democratic process.
- Student engagement with Citizens UK, The National Union of Students and other organisations representing the views of young people and communities to local and national politicians.
- Regular debates encouraging freedom of expression and ensuring students have their say on key local and national issues

#### **The rule of law**

- Close partnership working with the police to reinforce the need for students to abide by the laws of the land.
- Close links with agencies working with young people with criminal records to support them to get their lives back on track.
- A student code of conduct that sets out the broad expectations of the college.
- Embedding and reinforcement of college values and the student code of conduct.
- Robust and effective disciplinary processes that provide a framework for sanction should students not abide by college rules.
- Visits and speakers from a range of organisations such as the magistrates, police, and members of parliament to encourage students to engage with law making.

## **Individual liberty**

- Responsibility is one of the college's core values and as such students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own choices, actions and decisions and the impact that they have on others.
- Students are encouraged to make informed and positive choices about their future, this may be in terms of their next steps, their behaviour or their life outside college.
- At the core of the college's ethos is raising aspiration; as such we actively encourage our students to achieve their potential with the aim that they leave the college broad minded, respectful and effective global citizens.
- The college operates a zero tolerance policy in relation to any form of bullying. Students are encouraged to respect each other and respect another's right to have an opinion and express that opinion free from fear.
- We work with students to enable them to make informed choices about their own health and run regular sessions with students on topics such as alcohol awareness, drug awareness, safe sex and teenage pregnancy.

## **Mutual respect and tolerance for those from different faiths and beliefs.**

- Respect is one of the core values of the college and as such guides both staff and student behaviour.
- Respect is well embedded within the college's student and staff code of conduct and we actively promote an environment of mutual respect that is free from any form of harassment and discrimination.
- Equality and diversity is well embedded within our college we have a robust policy framework to guide our work in this area and a proactive and effective equality and diversity steering group.
- An appreciation of and celebration of different faiths and beliefs forms part of our annual calendar of events and the college promotes and celebrates a range of religious festivals and ideals throughout the year.
- The college engages the services of a voluntary chaplain who runs faith groups, one to one support and delivers a tutorial programme around faith and belief.
- The Chaplain has developed an inter-faith group to promote and encourage dialogue between different faiths within college.
- An appreciation of diversity is well embedded within the college's teaching and learning.

## Section I - Specific action we will take for identified groups

### Socio-economic factors

The external environment in which the college works makes meeting the needs of individuals from socio-economically deprived areas essential. The college's vision is rooted in the belief that the college has a role to play in addressing socio-economic disadvantage and in so doing improving the life chances of individuals and the prosperity of the whole community.

60% of the of the college's 16-18 are classified as living in an area of significant deprivation in addition 8% of our students population were in receipt of some form of hardship related financial support with a further 4% being identified as particularly vulnerable. The college monitors the success of learners from disadvantaged groups and for 2012/13 there was a significant gap in the retention of these students, predominantly those who have declared a criminal record. Students in receipt of hardship related financial support tended to out-perform students not in receipt of such benefits. There are a number of strands of the college's activity that support this element of the scheme:

- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) project – the college has a successful centre dedicated to young people suffering socio-economic disadvantage who have disengaged from education and training. The Ashfield centre has attracted over 400 learners in the last four years and has success rates of over 85% and progression rates over 90%. This centre has contributed to a 2% reduction in local NEET figures.
- Through the college's learner recruitment and community development teams we actively engage with individuals and communities from areas of socio-economic deprivation, the use of positive role models in the form of both staff and learners helps encourage underrepresented groups into mainstream provision at the college.
- The expansion of the college's HE provision has been specifically targeted at local people who would otherwise not engage with higher level study.
- The college has a large apprenticeship programme with elements targeted at NEET young people and young people from deprived areas. The programmes give young people real job opportunities and help to break the cycle of worklessness prevalent in the local community served by the college. Since 2010 we have supported close to 3000 young people into work through this programme.
- The Inspire and Achieve Foundation is a charitable foundation established by the college's Principal specifically aimed at serving the needs of the young people suffering from socio-economic disadvantage. The charity aims to inspire young people to achieve through the provision of high quality provision such as that at the college's Ashfield centre.

The college provides a number of support mechanisms including financial support mechanisms for learners suffering socio-economic disadvantage, these support mechanisms are intended to support the retention of learners by enabling financial support for travel and course materials. In addition, the college operates a free bus service for learners that enables those travelling to college from outlying districts to access the college's services.



## Age

In 2008, the numbers of young people on school rolls begins to fall off dramatically; as a result we live in an increasingly ageing society. Ensuring that opportunities are offered to all members of the community to contribute regardless of age will be of paramount importance in this context.

The average age of college employees is 43 and over 50% of our learners are over the age of 19. The college has a range of options to encourage adult learners back into work, however pressures on adult learning funding and on funding to support training in the workplace are likely to have a negative impact on the ability of the college to continue to offer as full a range of provision as it currently does.

In 2012/13 our data analysis shows a slight achievement gap between 16-18 and 19+ learners. However 16-18 year old students tend to do slightly (3.5%) better than their 19+ peers in terms of their success on long qualifications. Differences are particularly pronounced with females where achievement gaps rise to 5%.

The college's HR policies will reflect this commitment and will not discriminate on the grounds of age in our recruitment and selection or progression processes. We will encourage the full commitment and contribution of all staff regardless of age.

As an education provider it is our duty not only to eliminate discrimination but to foster an appreciation of people of different ages and as such we will celebrate the success of learners and staff regardless of age.

The college provides education and training for a wide range of age groups and is committed to ensuring educational opportunities are available for all people within the community regardless of age. We will work actively with community groups and others to tackle the basic skills deficits within the adult population and will examine ways in which we can use our fee policy and other measures to encourage participation in education by adults.

## Disability

The college believes that disability equality is much more than providing physical access to its buildings. The college will strive to create an atmosphere where the contributions of all our staff and learners are valued and celebrated and that learners and staff with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are provided with appropriate support, including adaptive equipment and special examination arrangements and in no way feel isolated from college life on account of their LDD.

The college actively recruits staff with disabilities and seeks the advice of the Additional Learning Support (ALS) team to ensure that staff are appropriately guided to be successful in their new roles. 3.8% of staff have declared a disability. The college has achieved the positive about disabled people kitemark. We will guarantee all applicants with a disability who reach the requirements of the job an interview.

The college will ensure that managers are aware of how to manage staff who either are or become disabled. This means training managers to become aware of how to make reasonable adjustments and providing them with readily available sources of relevant information.

The college has a disability statement outlining the range of services to LDD, which encapsulates its commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity. Overall the college recruits over 30,000 learners per year, 21% of which declared that they have a LDD. We supported over 1,500 learners through additional learning support.

There are no specific achievement gaps in relation to LDD students on campus, on the whole students who declare they have a disability or learning difficulty tend to out-perform those who do not. This is most particularly pronounced at level 1 where LDD students out-perform by 11%. Students with a declared mental health issue are the only group of students that under-perform at 16-18 with a 67% success rate, with issues across both retention and success. Within our apprenticeship and work place learning provision there is a 15% timely success gap with students who have declared a disability or learning difficulty under-performing against other students. It should be noted that numbers of students who have declared a disability are relatively small and as such data will be skewed by very small numbers of students.

The college collects data about its learners on enrolment and at points throughout the year. The data is used to ensure that the college is achieving its aims in relation to equality of opportunity generally and specifically in relation to this section to ensure that the college achieves equality of opportunity for its learners with a disability.

The college has a number of measures in place to ensure that LDD are given the chance to realise their potential and succeed within the college:

- 1) Improvements to physical access to the college, including improvements to signage, ramp access and lifts across the college's estate. We provide limited free specialist transport to and from college and for inter-site travel which enables access across all provision and sites.
- 2) The provision of an additional learning support team who work with learners to assess need and negotiate support strategies which enables success.
- 3) The provision of a range of specialist teams to support learners with the following difficulties:
  - emotional and behavioural difficulties;
  - Autistic Spectrum Disorder;
  - mental health;
  - visual impairment;
  - hearing impairment;
  - physical disability;
  - dyslexia.

4) Provision of specialist advice and guidance for LDD issues which includes:

- health, wellbeing and mental health;
- counselling;
- learner advisers;
- information, advice and guidance;
- finance and transport;
- careers guidance.

## **Gender reassignment**

The college is committed to ensuring we promote and protect the dignity and confidentiality of those staff and learner members who may be gender reassigned or undergoing gender reassignment therapy. We will:

- Provide access to toilet and other facilities and services appropriate to the gender reassignment.
- Provide time off for employees or learners needing to attend medical or therapeutic sessions within work or college time.
- If appropriate establish support groups within the college or refer individuals to support groups outside of the college environment.
- Provide confidential advice and guidance to both learners and staff as and when required.

The confidentiality of individuals is of paramount importance in this regard and as such we do not collect data in relation to this characteristic.

## **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

The college will not discriminate on the grounds of marriage or civil partnership status and will actively ensure that its policies and procedures recognise the rights of same sex married couple and civil partners.

We will work hard to promote understanding of same sex marriage amongst our workforce and will work with partners such as Stonewall to achieve this aim.

## **Pregnancy and Maternity**

The college will not discriminate on the grounds of maternity including in its recruitment and selection and promotion processes. The college has the following processes and procedures in place to support employees wishing to take maternity leave:

- An agreed maternity policy
- Enhanced maternity pay
- Flexible working arrangements to enable return to work
- Recognised keeping in touch days to enable employees to return to work with confidence
- On site nursery provision, graded outstanding by Ofsted

Maternity, paternity and adoption leave entitlements are available to same sex partners are entitlements to parental leave and requests for flexible working.

In terms of our student population the college will offer support for students who are pregnant during their time at college, this includes additional learning support and flexible study arrangements to support achievement and progression. Our Ashfield centre offers young parents support and advice and guidance to help them come to terms with their new responsibilities as a parent.

## Race

The college's own community and the community that it serves are not particularly ethnically diverse, although latest census figures for the local area would indicate that this has risen by 2% to 5.3%. We believe our responsibilities in promoting race equality and celebrating racial difference are all the more important because of this. We need to ensure that our learners and staff are equipped with a knowledge and appreciation of racial difference to enable them to engage as effective global citizens.

Within the local population, 5.3% of residents are from BME backgrounds. Within the college, 14% of on-campus learners are from BME backgrounds and 5.6% of staff have declared they are from a BME background. The college will work to ensure that its learner profile at least matches that of the Mansfield community and that its staff profile matches that of the learner population. The target for our staff profile is an aspirational one and as such we will employ a number of strategies to make this a reality, including a number of positive action initiatives to encourage the employment of BME staff within high profile and visible positions.

On campus, in terms of ethnicity at overall level there is no success gap between BME and non-BME students. However there is an 8% achievement gap in 16-18 long qualifications data with white British students out-performing BME students by 8%, this translates to a 3% gap in success rates. At 19+ this gap increases to 13%, translating into a 9% gap in success. Further analysis would indicate that at 16-18 this is at long level 1 and at 19+ is at long level 1 and 3. Success rates for BME students have increased over a three year trend period but not at the same rate as other students. Within apprenticeships and work place learning, there is a significant achievement gap (for Vision Workforce Skills 14%) however numbers of students are so small that this equates to 2 students.

The college has a number of ways in which it currently promotes race equality within the college. The methodologies ensure that the college complies with the positive duties in relation to the promotion of racial equality and good relations between people of different racial groups:

- The use of positive action as appropriate to encourage a wide range of applicants for both employment positions and courses.
- The use of non-stereotypical images in all materials it produces for learners and staff and the use of images that promote a positive understanding of different cultures and racial groups.
- Embedding equality and diversity within the curriculum, including the introduction of specific training sessions for teaching staff
- The use of enrichment activities including learner trips and visits.
- The celebration of cultural and religious festivals within the college.
- The hosting of a 'one world' equality and diversity event at the college.
- The college has developed good links with local community leaders.
- At staff induction sessions.
- Visual promotional material on display at the college's premises.

## Religion and belief

The college will seek to promote equality of opportunity between all learners and staff regardless of their religion.

In line with the Equality Act 2006, the College defines religion and belief as:

- Religion means any religion.
- Belief means any religious or philosophical belief.
- A reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.
- A reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.

The college celebrates religious, cultural and other festivals throughout the year and will ensure that learners and staff are provided with an understanding and appreciation of different religions and their contribution to our society. We have developed good relationships with local religious groups throughout the area. In order to help coordinate this activity we have a cultural and religious events group.

Since 2010 the college has engaged the services of a voluntary chaplain who has developed a number of ways to promote religion and belief:

- The development of a Christian union
- The development of an inter-faith group to promote and encourage debate amongst different faiths.
- The development of specific tutorial sessions on religion and belief
- The celebration of specific religious festivals
- The development of links with local faith groups.



## Sex

The college will seek not only to eliminate gender discrimination, but also to create a working and a learning environment based on good relations between women and men. To this end, the college undertakes to provide diverse, non-stereotypical images of women and men in any material which it produces for learners and staff. The aim is to create a positive inclusive ethos where issues of gender discrimination and stereotyping can be discussed openly, with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing sexism and sex discrimination, to respecting diversity and difference and to encouraging good relations between men and women.

The college's gender profile for staff is 64% female and 36% male. This has remained consistent for the previous three years. The learner gender profile is 54% male and 46% female, except in work place learning where the profile is over 80% male – largely attributed to the sectors within which the college works.

Within the curriculum teams there are issues of representation amongst males and females in the areas of Hair and Beauty, Childcare, Engineering and Construction. The college will attempt to address the gender imbalances within these areas, through the promotion of career options for both males and females and will consider other positive action measures such as dedicated curriculum or specialist centres to attract young males and females into non-traditional industries. The college will consider positive action measures in the recruitment of staff to these areas to provide positive and non-stereotypical role models for all learners. The college has applied for funding to support the encouragement of more female applicants into engineering, with a particular focus on apprenticeships. The college will link with the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) programme to promote female only work experience opportunities and female only careers events to encourage more applicants within this area. Positive progress in this regard has been made in construction and engineering where participation has increased across most areas.

In terms of gender at overall level, the college has a 3% success gap between male and female students with males out-performing females. This is entirely an issue of retention with achievement rates for both groups being equal. Further analysis would indicate that the predominant issue is at 19+ level 3. Within college based apprenticeship provision there is a 14% achievement gap, with males out-performing females.

The college will ensure that all staff, regardless of gender will have equal access to training, promotion and other aspects of career development. Where issues are identified through our impact assessment, we will consider positive action measures to address any gender imbalances or other issues.

The college undertakes an annual analysis of pay against appropriate protected characteristics. This will inform the college of any anomalies which need to be addressed.

The college uses the nationally agreed sector job evaluation scheme to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

The college will ensure that all staff are treated fairly in relation to caring responsibilities and will work with staff of any gender that may need to work flexibly in order to meet these caring responsibilities to find a solution that meets the needs of the individual and the college.

## Sexual orientation

The college will seek to actively promote equality of opportunity between all learners and staff regardless of their sexual orientation.

The college defines sexual orientation as an individual's sexual orientation towards:

- Persons of the same sex as him or her;
- Persons of the opposite sex; or
- Both.

In 2013 the college joined the Stonewall equality and college champions programme and participated in the workplace equality index, this ranked the college at 291 of 369 organisations who undertook the survey and has identified a number of actions that the college will take to improve the work it does to promote LBG issues and provide an environment that is inclusive and positive about gay people.

All of the college's policies and procedures recognise same sex partnerships and marriages and afford same sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples.

In 2012/13 0.6% of the college's employees had declared that they were LGB, however the college only has data for 38% of its population. A focus for 2014 onwards will be reducing the numbers of unknowns to enable proper data analysis. This protected characteristic remains a key priority for the college; nationally homophobic bullying is a significant contributor to failure within an educational context and a major contributory factor to teenage mental health issues. Our action plan therefore contains a separate strand related to this area of work.

The college undertakes the following activities in relation to this strand of the scheme:

- Active engagement with Nottingham Pride.
- Specific and targeted tutorials about the use of homophobic language and its impact on individuals.
- Promotion of LGBT month and a celebration of prominent gay role models.
- Participation in the Stonewall work equality champions programme and regional champions networks
- The active use of Stonewall materials within the college.

## Appendix A – Equality and Diversity Policy Statement



### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

#### INTRODUCTION

West Nottinghamshire College is committed to promoting a culture that respects the diversity and difference across our society and community. Our aim is to develop an environment, which treats individuals with dignity and respect. We will work with our community to foster good relations and develop a sense of community cohesion.

The college aims to ensure that all individuals and groups it has contact with ie learners, actual or potential employees, Governors, contractors, visitors, parents and carers have their individual needs met regardless of: age; disability; family responsibility; marital status; race; colour; ethnicity; nationality; religion or belief; gender; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; maternity; socio-economic status; trade union activity; unrelated criminal convictions; or other irrelevant criteria.

Respect is one of the college's values and we believe that our commitment to equality and diversity lies at the heart of challenging behaviour, attitudes and beliefs and respecting and celebrating diversity and difference. Responsibility, another of the college's values places individual responsibility on every member of the college's community to support, promote and celebrate diversity and difference.

#### PRINCIPLES

We believe that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable. In recognition of the fact that they can take a variety of forms, depending on the group against whom they are directed, the college will develop a framework of procedures, designed to ensure that discrimination will not take place and will take action discrimination does occur.

- The college will seek to challenge inequality, prejudice and discrimination.
- The college embraces diversity in all its aspects and aims to reflect, at every level, the community it serves.
- The college will treat all individuals with respect and dignity and seek to provide an environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. The college will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to arrangements and premises to ensure access.
- The college will publish an Equality Scheme that sets out its vision and objectives in relation to equality and diversity.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

### The Corporation Board

Is responsible for overseeing the college's progress towards the objectives within this Equality and Diversity Scheme and for approving the Equality Scheme and related action plan.

### The Principal

Is responsible for ensuring equality and diversity is championed at the highest level within the organisation.

### The Director: Communication, Marketing and Learner Engagement

Is the Executive team sponsor of equality and diversity and as such will chair the college's equality forums and ensure that managers across the college are committed to ensuring inclusion and access for all.

### All managers

Will be accountable for the implementation of equality and diversity objectives within their teams and for championing the vision and principles of equality and diversity with their staff and learners.

### Individual members of staff

All staff are responsible for the implementation of and support for the college's equality and diversity policies and action plan. It is up to them to challenge inappropriate, discriminatory and damaging behaviour as well as celebrating equality and diversity in their day to day roles across the college. Staff have a responsibility to contribute to the establishment of an equality and diversity action plan and to work with managers through formal and informal consultation mechanisms to ensure that our commitment to equality and diversity enshrined within the Scheme is translated into meaningful action across the college.

### All learners

Our learners are responsible for ensuring that they abide by the college's policy in relation to equality and diversity and respect difference and diversity within the college. They have a responsibility to provide feedback to the College on its policies and their practical implementation across the College. They have a responsibility to challenge inappropriate behaviour amongst their peers in a constructive manner.

## **MONITORING**

We will monitor progress towards our equality and diversity objectives on at least an annual basis.

## **COMPLIANCE**

Failure to comply with this policy will be taken very seriously and will result in disciplinary action being taken.